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UNCLAS THE HAGUE 003042

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [NL](#) [OREP](#) [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [AFIN](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL PAYNE (DEC 10-14)

REF: SECSTATE 335631

1. Mission warmly welcomes and grants country clearance for Rep. Donald M. Payne for travel to the Netherlands, December 11 and 14, 2003 to and from Accra, Ghana.

2. Control officer will be Special Assistant to Amb. Sobel, David Vennett, (w) 31-70-310-9342, (h) 31-70-362-8051, (c) 31-62-221-9301 (f) 31-70-310-9348, unclass email: vennettdj@state.gov.

SECURITY ADVISORY:

3. Post provides the following threat assessment for The Netherlands: The Department of State on November 21, 2003 issued a worldwide caution. The U.S. Government remains deeply concerned about the U.S. citizens overseas. U.S. citizens are cautioned to maintain a high level of vigilance, to remain alert and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. We are seeing increasing indications that Al-Qaida is preparing to strike U.S. interests abroad. Al-Qaida and its associated organizations have struck in the Middle East in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and in Europe in Istanbul, Turkey. We therefore assess that other geographic locations could be venues for the next round of attacks. We expect Al-Qaida will strive for new attacks designed to be more devastating than the September 11 attack, possibly involving non-conventional weapons such as chemical or biological agents. We also cannot rule out that Al-Qaida will attempt a second catastrophic attack within the U.S.

Terrorist actions may include, but are not limited to, suicide operations, hijackings, bombings or kidnappings. These may also involve commercial aircraft and maritime interests, and threats to include conventional weapons, such as explosive devices. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. These may include facilities where U.S. citizens and other foreigners congregate or visit, including residential areas, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels, outdoor recreation events or resorts and beaches. U.S. citizens should remain in a heightened state of personal security awareness when attendance at such locations is unavoidable. Please consult the Department's web site for text: <http://travel.state.gov>.

A concern for visitors is crime. Most crimes against official Americans are limited to pick-pocketing and luggage theft. Vandalism to and theft from automobiles and hotel rooms are not unknown. Recently, theft of laptop computers has increased, especially at Schiphol Airport and major train stations. The thieves operate in small groups that target travelers, are determined and well practiced at distraction theft. Several official travelers have been victimized lately, losing personal and unclassified government computers, valuable software and data. Travelers are reminded regulations require the use of the diplomatic pouch for shipment of classified equipment and information.

Streets can be walked in relative safety, but as in any U.S. urban area, caution should be exercised after dark in the more populated cities of The Hague, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam. Red-light districts and public transportation hubs are common locations for incidents of street crime.

SOBEL